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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

35TH YEAR

SEPTEMBER 4, 1978

Home Gardening

—Who's Interested?

Who is the home gardener? During each of the past three years approximately 1400 households were surveyed on gardening by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, according to Evelyn Kaitz, social science analyst. The findings showed that approximately 33 million households reported having a garden in 1975 and that the percentage of people raising home gardens has changed very little from 1974-1978. Perhaps four percent more may be recorded in 1978.

Single member households were more likely to have a garden than households with 3 or more members. Households with no children were more apt to have gardens than those with children---households with less than \$5,000 total family income were more likely than households with total family income from \$10 to \$15,000. Farm households were more interested in gardening than non-farm households and households in the south were more apt to garden than those in the western areas. Households where respondents' education had not gone beyond the eighth grade were more apt than those with higher educated respondents.

As the age of the respondent increased, the household was more apt to have a garden for 11 or more years--when the respondent was under 25 years of age, the household was more apt to have had a garden for only one or two years. Also, about 40 percent of the respondents less than 50 years of age said "yes," they gardened, but only about 15 percent of the respondents age 50 or over said "yes." The leading factors in growing a garden were for better quality fruits or vegetables and/or that the household members like the taste of home-grown fruits and vegetables better than store-bought varieties.



FOOD CLIPS

Freezing is one of the simplest and least time-consuming ways to preserve foods at home. It usually keeps the natural color, fresh flavor---and nutritive values of most fruits and vegetables, according to USDA home economists.

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All foods, however, do not freeze well. Green onions, lettuce, and other salad greens, radishes, tomatoes (except as juice or cooked) do not freeze satisfactorily.

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High quality in frozen food may be maintained only by correctly packaging the product. Packaging materials should be moisture-vapor proof to prevent evaporation. Rigid containers made of aluminum, glass, plastic and tin or heavily waxed cardboard are suitable for all packs, and especially liquid packs.

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Care in sealing a product for freezing is just as important as using the right type of container. Most bags used for packaging can be heat-sealed (which is ideal) or by using the twist band, or securing with string. The important thing is to keep out the air.

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Always allow "head" space in packing items for the freezer. Food generally expands when it freezes so you must allow space.

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School Lunch Proposal —Action Delayed

The "no candy, soda water, frozen desserts or chewing gum" proposal for schools participating in the national school lunch program will not become a final regulation at the beginning of the coming school year. The proposal was reported in Food and Home Notes, May 22, 1978. Since then, USDA has received more than 2100 comments, which will aid in the decision before final rules will be issued.

ABOUT YOU 'N' ME

Laura White, of the Boston Herald-American, named 1978 "Newswoman of the Year" by the New England Women's Press Association, has won more than ten national and regional journalism awards in the past five years..... Massachusetts Press Women chartered with the National Federation of Press Women on August 6 at the Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst.....Second Annual International Conference on Energy is set for Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1978 at the Shoreham Americana Hotel, Washington, D.C.....Revised publications called "Food Additives, Who Needs Them?" and "Your Breakfast Folder--As Seen by a Chemist" are available to the media free. Single copies may be obtained from the Manufacturing Chemists Association, 1825 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009 from Peggy Walton, Consumer Information....Fifth Annual National Consumer Affairs exchange program is set for Oct. 4-6, 1978, Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C. For information contact the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals, 777 14th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.